

Two Years Later: While The Affordable Care Act Strengthens Medicare, Republicans Want to End the Medicare Guarantee

Two years after health care reform was signed into law, seniors are already seeing the benefits: lower costs, improved quality, and additional benefits. Democrats remain committed to strengthening and preserving Medicare for current and future beneficiaries, while Republicans continue to call for – and vote for – taking away these new benefits, ending the Medicare guarantee, and raising costs for seniors.

When it comes to protecting Medicare, the contrasts between Democrats and Republicans could not be more clear:

Democrats' Affordable Care Act: Lower Costs and Greater Savings for Seniors and Disabled

Two years after health care reform was enacted, Medicare's costs have decreased or slowed:

- The 2012 Part A deductible increased by just \$24 since 2011 – **well below previous year increases and inflation.**
- The 2012 Part B deductible **decreased** by \$22 since 2011.
- The 2012 Part B premiums were **6% lower than projected** – meaning some seniors will see premiums slightly increase by \$3.50, others will see premiums decrease by more than \$15 since 2011.
- 2012 Medicare Advantage premiums **decreased by 7%** – and they are **16% lower than before the Affordable Care Act was signed into law.**
- Part D premiums held steady, with **no increase** to the average premium since 2011.
- **Total Medicare spending has slowed**, increasing by just 3.8% in FY11 (vs. an average of 9% per year from 2000-2009).
- Solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund has been increased by **eight years.**
- Medicare's new anti-fraud tools are working, saving taxpayers **\$4.1 billion** in fraudulent payments in 2011.

Democrats' Affordable Care Act: More Benefits and Choices for Seniors and the Disabled

Two years after health care reform was signed into law, beneficiaries have expanded benefits and choices:

Beneficiaries are paying less for **prescription drugs**, as the “donut hole” closes completely by 2020:

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 3/19/12

- **More than 5.1 million seniors and people with disabilities on Medicare saved over \$3.2 billion** on prescription drugs, an average of \$635 per person, thanks to \$250 donut hole rebate checks in 2010 and a 50% discount on brand-name drugs in 2011.

Beneficiaries are paying less and getting more **preventive care and wellness services**:

- **32.5 million beneficiaries** have received free preventive services, such as mammograms and colonoscopies.
- **2.3 million beneficiaries** have already taken advantage of a free annual wellness visit.

Beneficiaries continue to have **more Medicare Advantage choices**:

- MA enrollment increased by 10% this year, and by 17% since the Affordable Care Act was enacted.
- Today, **99.7% of beneficiaries** have access to a Medicare Advantage plan.

GOP Budget: Ends Medicare Guarantee and Increases Health Costs for Seniors and the Disabled

Republicans, on the other hand, want to end the Medicare guarantee. They have voted **three times** for a budget that ends the Medicare guarantee and raises health care costs for seniors, and they have voted **14 times** to repeal patient protections and health care benefits.

If Republicans had it their way:

- Seniors' out-of-pocket health care costs would increase by more than **\$6,000 per year**.
- **54-year-olds** would have to save **an additional \$182,000** just to cover health care costs.
- The prescription drug donut hole would reopen, **increasing seniors' drug costs by up to \$44 billion** through 2020, including **\$2.2 billion in 2012 alone**.
- Preventive care and wellness visits would cost more, **increasing beneficiaries' out-of-pocket costs by over \$110 million in 2012 alone**.